

Pew Report to Lt. Governor Hall-Long Outlines Steps for Delaware to Address Opioid Use Disorder

Recommendations focus on systemic changes and expanding treatment options

New Castle, Del. – On Thursday, Lt. Governor Hall-Long joined members of Delaware’s Behavioral Health Consortium, community advocates, and elected officials to accept recommendations from The Pew Charitable Trusts aimed at reforming Delaware’s addiction treatment system. Pew Charitable Trusts has been working in partnership with the Behavioral Health Consortium, chaired by Lt. Governor Hall-Long, to reshape Delaware’s behavioral health treatment system for those struggling with addiction to opioids. Delaware is one of only two states nationwide to partner with Pew over the last year.

“Addressing Delaware’s opioid use disorder is a major step in making our state healthier and stronger,” said **Lt. Governor Bethany Hall-Long**. “I’ve said all along that it is going to take all hands on deck in order to make an impact and begin saving lives. This report lays out a comprehensive set of specific steps Delaware can take to create a behavioral health system that works for everyone. I want to thank the Pew Charitable Trusts for partnering with the Behavioral Health Consortium to help us identify ways we can better deliver addiction treatment services for all Delawareans.”

Pew began work with the Behavioral Health Consortium in July of last year to help combat the opioid crisis as Delaware saw overdose deaths increase from 345 to 400 in 2018. Pew

conducted a comprehensive needs assessment of Delaware's treatment system by conducting interviews with state agency leaders, elected officials, and key stakeholders in order to identify gaps and develop strategic solutions and policies to create a more unified statewide continuum of care for those in need.

"Delaware has made great strides in addressing the opioid crisis, a complicated public health problem that demands multifaceted solutions," **said Beth Connolly, director of The Pew Charitable Trusts' substance use prevention and treatment initiative.** "It's a problem that also requires commitment and collaboration from state leaders to get more Delawareans the evidence-based treatment they need. We are pleased to help further this crucial work in partnership with the Behavioral Health Consortium, Lt. Gov. Hall-Long, and the Delaware General Assembly."

The final report contains eight recommendations which are focused on the four key components of an effective treatment system; Treatment system transformation that will allow individuals the appropriate treatment and access to quality care; coverage and reimbursement so that they can access care; a substance use disorder workforce that can address treatment needs; and underserved populations and expansion of medically assisted treatment in our Corrections system.

"The recommendations confirm the path we are on in terms of strengthening our public treatment system across the state," **said Elizabeth Romero, director of the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health** in the Department of Health and Social Services. "Pew Charitable Trusts has provided us with important insights into identifying the gaps we have in the treatment system, our workforce needs, and issues with coverage and reimbursement. We appreciate the partnership and leadership of Pew, the Behavioral Health Consortium and the Lt. Governor."

The full report and recommendations can be viewed [HERE](#)

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